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# GEAR UP FOR THE NEW YEAR!

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## Winter 2018 Update



### **Why Do I Need to Use Back-up Belayers?**

The COPE & Climbing Task Force reviews all incidents involving COPE, Climbing, Canyoneering, and Caving that occur in BSA programs (at least all of those that are properly reported). In our last analysis, as in most previous ones, the largest number of incidents in unit and council/district climbing and COPE occurred as a result of belay inattention. In most of these cases, there was no back-up belayer present. This should not be the case since NCAP clearly requires that “Back-up

belayers are required whenever possible” (see NCAP page PS-206-4). On a COPE course or artificial climbing wall it is normally a simple matter to employ a back-up belayer, and where it is not possible, redesign may be necessary. In natural rock settings, back-up belayers may not be close to the primary belayer but they can be employed via simple redirects or re-positioning the belayer or anchor. If there is no way to employ a back-up belayer, that particular route may not be the best scouting activity. Having a back-up belayer does not a guarantee that incidents won't occur, but is one more layer of safety precaution that may reduce the chances.

In at least one of the incidents occurring in 2017, there was a back-up belayer present; however, neither the primary belayer nor the back-up belayer paid close enough attention to the climber and belay tension to prevent the incident, and a staff member was not close enough to intervene. This emphasizes the importance of staff attention to one of the most critical activities in COPE and climbing: the integrity of the belay. It is easy for everyone at the site to become focused on the climber's progress up the route rather than making sure that the belay is being done properly. The primary belayer should be the only one focused on the climber, while also watching the tension on the belay line carefully to make sure there is not too much slack between the belay device and the climber. The back-up belayer should be focused on the primary belayer, in particular his/her hand position and the tension of the belay line. Staff must be focused on the entire belay team, making sure that each of them is doing their job properly, and be in a position to quickly and effectively intervene should something go wrong. These situations often present “teachable moments” where staff can ask that the climber stop for a moment while the belay team regains proper control and receives coaching on how to do the job better. Well-run programs put the focus on the proficiency of the belay teams and the readiness of their staff to handle situations that could compromise the integrity of the belay system.

We are headed in the right direction with steadily declining incident rates in COPE & Climbing. Let's all do our part to eliminate incidents resulting from belay inattention. These are all preventable.

## **ACCT Membership and Standards**

Recently, BSA made ACCT membership available to all BSA members for a reduced price. Last fall, the following sign-up information was emailed out through COPE & Climbing Area Advocates:

We recently worked out a new membership agreement for BSA members with the Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT). All BSA members are welcome to take advantage of this offer. Membership in ACCT provides the following:

- On-line access to ACCT standards
- Discounts for ACCT conferences and training events
- ACCT newsletters
- Alerts for product advisories & safety notices
- Networking opportunities with other people interested in challenge course facilitation, operation, management, design, and inspection

You will be registered with ACCT as a BSA National Council member at a discounted rate of \$30/year. The process is simple:

1. Email Natalie Hill (ACCT membership manager) at: [membership@acctinfo.org](mailto:membership@acctinfo.org) requesting to join ACCT as a member of BSA National Council
2. Natalie will send you a link for you to complete your individual profile and make your payment on-line
3. Complete the on-line profile and make your payment

It is as simple as that!

### **FA-715 ACCT Standards Compliance**

Membership in ACCT provides on-line access to ACCT standards. The Verification section of NCAP FA-715 (see page FA-715-2) requires "Copy of current edition of ACCT Standards". ACCT no longer provides the standards in printed form as a membership benefit, and the standards cannot be printed from the ACCT website. Printed copies can be ordered, but the lead times are long, and the price is very high. Someone with access to the standards should be present during the NCAP assessment visit to demonstrate that a copy of the ACCT standards is available for review.

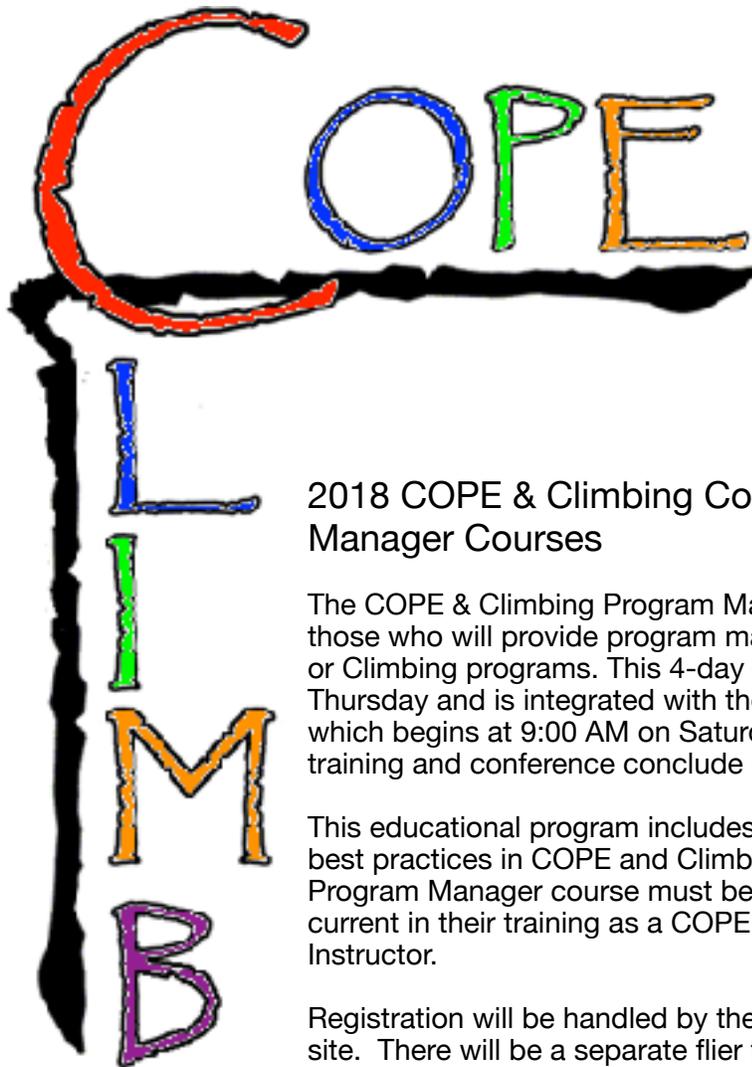
### **Continuing Education**

There are many ways to keep your COPE and Climbing training current. Of course, you can elect to simply re-take the Director or Program Manager training when your time is nearly expired, or you can strengthen your skills through alternative educational events and experiences using the Continuing Education process. The use of this method has been increasing, and many scouters are finding it a good way to improve their skills beyond what can be obtained from taking the same course over again.

Information on this process can be found on the COPE & Climbing page of [scouting.org](http://scouting.org). There are forms for COPE & Climbing Director and COPE & Climbing Program Manager training renewals. There are many educational events listed on the forms, but don't let that limit your experiences. If you don't find the course you are interested in on the list, simply contact your COPE & Climbing Area Advocate and he/she will request that the course be evaluated by the task force. Please do this prior to taking the course to avoid disappointment in case the course does not meet the criteria for approval.

### **COPE & Climbing Conferences and Program Manager Training**

COPE & Climbing Program Manager training for 2018 will take place in conjunction with COPE & Climbing conferences that will be held in several locations across the country. The brochure below provides information on those locations and dates. Contact the email address for the course you are interested in for additional information.



### 2018 COPE & Climbing Conferences & Program Manager Courses

The COPE & Climbing Program Manager Course is designed for those who will provide program management for council COPE and/or Climbing programs. This 4-day course begins at 9:00 AM on Thursday and is integrated with the COPE & Climbing Conference which begins at 9:00 AM on Saturday. The Program Manager training and conference conclude at noon on Sunday.

This educational program includes many opportunities for sharing best practices in COPE and Climbing programs. Participants in the Program Manager course must be in good physical condition and current in their training as a COPE or Climbing Director or Level II Instructor.

Registration will be handled by the host council on their registration site. There will be a separate flier for each course. Fees for Program Manager course and conference will be determined by the host council, and may vary from one location to another. The objective is to keep the fees as low as possible without placing a financial burden on the host council.

#### 2018 COPE & Climbing Program Manager Courses

Starts	Ends	City/State	Location	Email contact
2/22/18	2/25/18	Bridgeport, TX	Sid Richardson Scout Ranch	<a href="mailto:jim@bsaclimbing.org">jim@bsaclimbing.org</a>
3/8/18	3/11/18	Phoenix, AZ	Heard Scout Pueblo	<a href="mailto:sedodson1@roadrunner.com">sedodson1@roadrunner.com</a>
4/5/18	4/8/18	Loveland, OH	Camp Friedlander	<a href="mailto:harrits@earthlink.net">harrits@earthlink.net</a>
9/27/18	9/30/18	Cedar Glen, CA	Hubert Eaton Scout Reservation	<a href="mailto:sedodson1@roadrunner.com">sedodson1@roadrunner.com</a>
10/4/18	10/7/18	Central City, IA	Howard H Cherry Scout Reservation	<a href="mailto:winterjohnl@icloud.com">winterjohnl@icloud.com</a>
11/2/18	11/4/18	Lebanon, TN	Boxwell Scout Reservation	<a href="mailto:rjhinckley@bellsouth.net">rjhinckley@bellsouth.net</a>
11/2/18	11/4/18	Plymouth, CT	Camp Mattatuck	<a href="mailto:usagymct@aol.com">usagymct@aol.com</a>